

REMARKS

This amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed August 7, 2003, the period in which to respond has been extended to and including January 7, 2004, by the accompanying Petition for a Retroactive Two-Month Extension of Time, wherein July 26, 2002 wherein: (1) the Examiner commented on the Abstract; (2) claims 1, 2, 5 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,199,209 (CHERIAN et al.); (3) (4) claims 12-13 and 15-19 were allowed; and, (4) 3, 4, and 6-10 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter, but were rejected on technical grounds as depending from a rejected base claim.

By the present amendment, applicants have: (1) amended the Abstract; (2) amended claims 1 and 3, 4, 9 and 12; and, (3) presented remarks for consideration. Entry of this amendment and reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

The Abstract has been amended to overcome the objection to the specification. Withdrawal of the objection to the specification is therefore respectfully requested.

Applicants note with interest that although the Examiner has withdrawn his prior anticipation rejection based upon RATHBURN '521, the Examiner has raised CHERIAN et al. '209 as an anticipatory reference. CHERIAN et al. '209 is similar to RATHBURN '521 in that its conductive terminals are held (actually laminated or sandwiched) in an elastomeric body that has no cavities. Applicants have amended claim 1 to differentiate the claimed invention from the structure shown in CHERIAN et al '209. It is noted that claim 1, as amended, calls for the terminals to be disposed in "cavities", of which there are none in CHERIAN et al. '209. CHERIAN et al. '209 has a solid body formed from laminating multiple sheets of elastomer together.

Furthermore, claim 1 calls for the connector housing to be formed from a "plastic", which is rigid and not a flexible elastomer as shown in and suggested by CHERIAN et al. '209 without any cavities or other type openings. Still further, amended claim 1 calls for the retention members of the terminals to be "molded into" the connector housing. The terminals of CHERIAN et al. '209 are clearly not molded into any sort of a connector housing where the retention members of the terminals are molded into the housing, while the remainder of the terminal is disposed in a cavity, Such a structure is clearly not shown in or suggested by CHERIAN et al. '209.

It is fundamental practice that for a reference to "anticipate" a patent claim, each and every feature of the claim must be present, either expressly or inherently in the prior art reference. That is not the case here, for there are many claimed features that are simply not present in CHERIAN et al. '209. The Examiner has failed to appreciate the language of independent claim 1.

Withdrawal of all the rejections and the allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: December 19, 2003

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